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MOORE, HANSEN & SUMNER, PLLP
225 SOUTH SIXTH ST
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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Boyd Perttu :
Application No. 10/795,782 :
Filed: March 8, 2004 :
Attorney Docket No. P18-005-01-US :

ON PETITION

This is a decision on the petition filed July 17, 2006, to revive the above identified application under 37 CFR 1.137(a)¹ or in the alternative under 37 CFR 1.137 (b)².

The petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) is **DISMISSED**.

The petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

A Final Office Action was mailed June 14, 2005 and set a three (3) month shortened statutory period for reply. On November 18, 2005 applicant replied with an amendment and a three month extension of time request. On December 19, 2005, an Advisory Action was mailed advising that the amendment did not place the application in condition for allowance. Since the maximum period of time obtainable for an extension of time had elapsed and since no proper reply had been received, the application had become abandoned as of September 15, 2005. Accordingly, a Notice of Abandonment was mailed on February 24, 2006.

¹ A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed; In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(l);

(3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

² Effective December 1, 1997, the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) now provide that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may required additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

PETITION UNDER 37 CFR 1.137(a)

The Commissioner may revive an abandoned application if the delay in responding to the relevant outstanding Office requirement is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to be "unavoidable".³ Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.⁴

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a).⁵ Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action, but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, facsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.⁶

Petitioner asserts that the delay in filing a proper response to the Office Action was due to the Advisory Action not being mailed until after the expiration of the period for reply.

³35 U.S.C. § 133.

⁴In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

⁵See MPEP 711(c)(III)(C)(2) for a discussion of the requirements for a showing of unavoidable delay.

⁶Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

Pursuant to both 37 CFR 1.116 and 37 CFR 1.135(b): (A) the admission of, or refusal to admit, any amendment after final rejection, or any related proceedings, will not operate to save the application from abandonment; and (B) the admission of, or refusal to admit, any amendment not responsive to the last action, or any related proceedings, will not operate to save the application from abandonment. Accordingly, the filing of an amendment that does not place an application in condition for allowance will not extend the statutory period for reply, regardless of when the amendment is considered by the examiner, and will not prevent abandonment of the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to take the necessary action in an application under a final Office action to provide a complete and proper reply. The fact that the examiner may not have an opportunity to review any amendment prior to the end of the period for reply does not relieve applicant of the responsibility to submit a complete and proper reply prior to the end of the statutory period for reply in order to avoid abandonment. In fact, the possibility of abandonment for failure to do so is precisely the possibility that applicants are cautioned of in §§ 1.116 and 1.135(b). Petitioner was not entitled to an advisory action prior to the end of the statutory period, nor should petitioner have relied on receiving one before taking action to save the application from abandonment.

Petitioner's contention that the failure to receive the Advisory Action prior to the expiration of the period for reply caused or contributed to unavoidable delay is not well taken. The showing presented is insufficient to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a). As petitioner has not provided a showing of evidence to satisfy the requirements of a grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), the petition will be dismissed.


PETITION UNDER 37 CFR 1.137(b)

This petition, as filed in the alternative under 37 CFR 1.137(b), is granted.

As the present petition was filed and decided under both 37 CFR 1.137(a) and (b), counsel's deposit account, No. 13-4300, has been charged in the amount of \$250 for the unavoidable petition and \$750 for the unintentional petition.

This matter is being referred to Technology Center 3643 for processing of the RCE filed July 17, 2006 with an amendment as the submission under 37 CFR 1.114.

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned Petitions Attorney at (571) 272-3212.



Patricia Faison-Ball
Senior Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions